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COST RANGE FOR CLEANING UP BREMERTON GASWORKS: \$339,000 TO \$2.9 MILLION

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BREMERTON —

A new study conducted at the [Bremerton Gasworks site](#) has allowed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to outline cleanup actions ranging in cost from \$339,000 to \$2.9 million.

The new study adds details to a previous study, which showed that the 3.7-acre waterfront site is heavily contaminated with cancer-causing chemicals. Some of the worst compounds probably spilled from a coal-gasification plant that operated at the site from the 1930s into the 1950s, according to the studies.

The property lies between Pennsylvania Avenue and Thompson Drive on Port Washington Narrows. It has been considered as a possible location for a future marina, an industrial complex or even a city park.

Volatile and semivolatile organic compounds, petroleum hydrocarbons and metals were found in high concentrations at a few "hot spots" and in lower concentrations scattered around the site. Several active seeps were found to be discharging hazardous chemicals into Port Washington Narrows.

In one location, benzene, a known carcinogen, was found in concentrations more than 400 times higher than an EPA standard based on risks to human health and the environment.

The report, prepared by Ecology and Environment, Inc., of Seattle, offers a rough estimate of three cleanup options:

— Excavating soils at the hot spots and installing monitoring wells to track any movement of additional contamination. The estimated cost: \$339,000.

— In addition to excavating hot spots and installing monitoring wells, adding a pump-and-treat system to clean up the groundwater. The estimated cost: \$973,000.

— Doing everything in option No. 2, plus capping the surface with plastic and asphalt, adding a barrier wall to block contamination, and dredging sediments near the shoreline. The estimated price: \$2.9 million.

Tim Nord of the Washington Department of Ecology said he wants to meet with EPA officials to discuss the findings and assess the severity of the problem.

"EPA's work was not intended to be a thorough examination of what is there or what should be done with it," he said. "We've kind of known all along that this is a nasty site."

One part of the site is owned by the Paul McConkey family and another part is owned by Natacha Sesko.

"It does seem like we're moving forward," said Paul "Trip" McConkey Jr., adding that he is pleased that the EPA has funded the initial studies under the agency's brownfields program, which attempts to put old industrial sites back into operation.

"We're amicable with any idea," said McConkey, who had proposed a marina and public park as one option.

Sesko said she wants to see the property cleaned up and hopes to work with the McConkeys on any future development.

Phil Williams, Bremerton's public works director, said the city has worked with EPA to get the studies done and would be happy to coordinate some kind of development. The involvement of the city or another local government is essential to obtain state grants to help with the cleanup.

"I think our best approach will be to really evaluate this report," Williams said, "then set up a meeting with the Department of Ecology to talk about one or more remedies that could work into their Model Toxics Control Act funding."

The ownership of the property and future financial arrangements must be worked out, Williams said. Former owners of the property — including predecessors of Cascade Natural Gas and one or more oil companies — may have passed on a liability to companies in existence today.

Nord said state funds for the cleanup could be difficult to obtain in light of the state's tight budget. It all comes down to priorities among all the hazardous sites available for funding, he said. One consideration is the risk of leaving the site alone.

"It is going to be a tough site by its nature, being on the water," Nord said. "We will meet with EPA and figure out the best approach."

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